

Busy Bee: Hand Washing Basics for Kid

Hand washing helps stop the spread of germs and illnesses. Germs can get on the hands when a child touches a doorknob, coughs or sneezes, or handles raw foods. Once the bacteria and germs are on a kid's hands, they can travel to other areas of the body easily. Children spread germs by touching their eyes and mouth. They can also spread germs by shaking another person's hand. From a young age, children need to learn when and how to wash their hands.

How to Wash Effectively

Getting kids to wash their hands effectively means making the process fun. When washing their hands, a child can sing a short, fun song. Kids can write their own songs about hand washing or sing a song like "Happy Birthday," which is the perfect length. Another way to make hand washing fun and effective is to use soap that appeals to kids. Hand washing soaps are available in bright colors and fruity scents. Kids can look for a soap bottle with pictures of their favorite cartoon character on it.

Teaching Tips for Good Hygiene

Children learn by doing. One way parents and teachers can help them learn good hygiene and hand washing skills is explain the process as the parent or teacher washes their own hands. After that, the parent or teacher can walk the child through the hand washing process. Hanging a poster in the bathroom that shows the steps to wash hands can also help kids learn.

How to be a Good Model for Kids

Kids mimic what they see adults doing. That means adults need to wash their hands regularly. A parent or other adult should wash their hands before they make a child's snack or lunch, for example. It's best if they wash up so that the child can see them doing it. They should also always wash their hands after using the bathroom, after touching something messy, and after any bodily contact with a child or other person. It's a great idea for adults to tell kids that they are about to wash their hands and why they are about to wash their hands.

Safety Precautions

Hot water can scald and burn young hands. Parents should make sure their children know to use warm water to wash, but not very hot water. A good way to prevent burns is to teach kids to turn on the cold water, then the hot water. At home, parents can set the water heater so that it never goes above 120 degrees Fahrenheit. 120 degrees is hot enough to effectively wash dishes and clothing and reduces the risks of serious burns considerably.

Parents should also keep an eye out for dangerous chemicals in the bathroom and kitchen sinks. They should make sure children know which soaps are good to use to wash their hands. Medications and other cosmetics should be on a high shelf, well out of the child's reach. Storing them in a locking cabinet is a good idea. It's also a good idea for parents to lock away cleaners like ammonia and bleach.

How to Properly Wash your Hands

Learning the proper way to wash hands can be fun for kids. The first step to proper hand washing is getting the hands wet with warm water. Kids should then apply a squirt of liquid hand soap to their hands. To get a lather, they should rub their hands together. Have them sing their song or count to 15 as they rub the hands together to effectively remove dirt and germs.

After they've lathered up, it's time to rinse. Kids should place their hands under running water to remove the soap. Once the soap is gone, it's time to dry the hands. Kids should use a fresh paper towel or a clean cloth towel and pat their skin dry. An electric dryer can be used if towels are not available. To keep their hands clean, kids should turn off the water using the towel.

Additional Resources:

- [Scrub Club](#)
- [Why Do I Need to Wash My Hands?](#)
- [Henry the Hand Champion Handwasher](#)
- [Hand Washing: It's In Your Hands!](#)
- [Hand Washing for Parents and Kids](#)
- [How to Wash 'Em Video](#)
- [Don't Get Caught Dirty Handed](#)
- [Wash Your Hands the Right Way](#)

- [Sink Those Germs! Beanbag Game](#)
- [Super Scrub and Bubbles Activity Book \(PDF\)](#)
- [Happy Hand Washing Song](#)
- [Test Your Hand Washing IQ!](#)
- [10 Quick and Quiet Steps to Hand Washing Success](#)
- [How and When to Wash Hands Video Clips](#)
- [Picture Quiz \(PDF\)](#)
- [Hand Washing to Prevent Flu](#)
- [Prairie Fare: The ABCs of Hand Washing](#)
- [Kid Scoop Hand Washing](#)
- [Be a Clean Hands Kid!](#)
- [Step by Step How to Wash](#)